

The Gift of Serving

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 (NASB)

The problem of selfishness

1. Abby is an extrovert; I want space! (I'm selfish)
 1. solution: the concept of family
2. The Corinthian church suffered from selfishness
3. Paul's solution: family, with gifted believers who "help"
Some immediately think, "yes!" it's about time. (but here's why we think this...)

The difference between world and church

4. Our culture has a love affair with selfishness (Starbucks)
5. Problematic: the church can't function like Starbucks
e.g. prophesy without love is nothing

1 Corinthians 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy...but do not have love, I am nothing.

What is love? Keller: love in the Bible is measured primarily by how much *we can give*.

Love = serving

Galatians 5:13-14 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

6. Church thrives on serving
 1. We can't just "serve others" (Luther: curvature of the heart)
 1. What's the opposite of love? Selfishness.
 1. many of us, though we would never say we aren't loving, are very selfish.

We need to be saved from our self

7. Jesus breaks the cycle of our selfishness

1. Three passages show this... **AP!**

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

Follow Jesus instead of self

8. Following Jesus means serving each other

There's much we can be known by: lights, hipness, programs, music, etc. Or... "serving"

Paul leaves "helps" out of his list (1 Cor. 12:29-31)

Don't know what your gift is? Serve!

9. The gift of serving inspires the rest of us to serve

Philippians 2:3-11 (HCSB)

Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death— even to death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow — of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.